

# Teamwork: Equipment, vehicle maintenance pool resources to keep bobtails running

By SSgt. Scott Davis  
Public affairs

Cracks in the floorboards of three quarters of the bobtail tow vehicles could have hampered flying operations if not for the teamwork of 48th Transportation Squadron and 48th Equipment Maintenance Squadron people.

A routine inspection of a Jeep bobtail tow vehicle found the floorboard under the driver's seat falling through due to rust and corrosion. Other bobtails were inspected and cracks were found which would have made the vehicles unsafe to operate.



**A1C Seth Galek, 48th Equipment Maintenance Squadron, pulls the seat from a bobtail.**

The bobtails, which are used to move aircraft support equipment and are the only vehicles certified to tow munitions, are critical to the 492nd, 493rd and 494th fighter squadrons and 48th EMS.

"Cracks on the floorboard are a common problem on the bobtails," said SSgt. Robert Knuth, vehicle maintenance allied trades NCOIC. "Normally, we would just weld the cracks."

Rather than relying on the normal fix, Knuth and MSgt. Alvin Wade, 48th EMS equipment maintenance section superintendent, devised a plan to prevent the problem occurring on a regular basis. The solution was to cut pieces of sheet metal, remove the seats from the bobtails, and weld the sheet metal into the floorboard.

A cost estimate to replace the floorboards on 30 bobtails was given at \$80,000; the repairs were made for under \$700.

"Taking these vehicles out of service for repairs could have potentially hurt the flying mission," said Capt. Sarah Misiak, 48th Transportation Squadron vehicle maintenance flight commander. "With teamwork, we were able to accomplish the mission without affecting the flying mission."

Vehicle maintenance and munitions systems specialists set up an assembly line process to



Photos by SSgt. Scott Davis

**A1C LaWayne Barner, vehicle maintenance, prepares to weld the crack in the floorboard of a bobtail.**

repair the vehicles while the serviceable bobtails were redistributed throughout the fighter squadrons to keep the mission going. The assembly line had munitions specialists taking the

seats out of the vehicles while vehicle maintenance members cut sheet metal and welded the pieces into the floorboards. Through teamwork, the 30 bobtails were repaired in nine days.

## Earth Week: Peacekeeper Park opens today, base invited

By Capt. Michael Nelson  
Environmental management flight commander

People are invited to attend the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Peacekeeper Park at noon today as part of Earth Week activities.

The park, which is adjacent to the Wings of Liberty Park, opens after nine months of planning and development.

The Peacekeeper Park pavilions and walking path have been set around Caudle Head Mere, which has served historically as the center for cultural and natural resources. People settled in the area as far back as 5,000 B.C, with most of the finds coming from the more recent Roman and Saxon eras between A.D. 400 - 1,000.

"The 48th Fighter Wing, in conjunction with the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Department and the current landlord, is working to preserve the area's natural resources, history and archaeology," said Mike Hastings, environmental conservation program manager. "The improvements to the area included new hedging, dredging the main pond, and constructing a picnic pavilion, footpaths and benches. A weir (a small dam on a river or stream) on the site was reconstructed and a pedestrian footbridge was built."

Caudle Head Mere and Peacekeeper Park support many plant and animal species. A recent survey by Suffolk Wildlife Trust identified 34 bird species in the area including nightingale, whitethroat, kestrel, willow warbler and mallard. The pond habitat also sup-

ports a colony of the protected species, *Triturus Vulgaris*, or smooth newt.

Twenty-eight grasses have been identified in the area. The park also includes two distinct woodlands with dogwood, sycamore, privet, elder bushes, nettle and ground ivy.

"The habitats supported by the pond and stream systems have suffered slightly from years of drought and water-level decline," said Ron Curry, engineering flight chief. "Under advisement of local authorities, our engineers carefully designed and carried out land development to improve and preserve this site."

"The project team cleverly made use of some of the Mere's natural materials to line the pond, thereby maintaining a sufficient water level to support the area habitats."